

Hansa takes influencers and early adopters seriously

 By [Banele Rewo](#)

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One would expect a huge brand like Hansa Pilsner to dismiss recommendations from the ground and sit pretty well on its laurels. They probably have intensely educated marketing experts in their offices studying markets and executing "solutions" around the clock...

Not so, however... After my last article ([Hansa has finally gotten my attention](#)), in which I pointed out "areas of improvement" within the marketing strategies involving influencers and early adopters, the beer brand took it by the proverbial horns and bundled up my peers and yours truly for fresh ideas.

The brainstorm session had not gone over an hour before several solutions were reached involving amongst others:

- The launching of the new bottle, at Thesis Social Jam Session on Sunday 3 July, three weeks prior to the national launch.
- Beer tours involving all kinds of early adopters who will be exposed to the taste of the Saaz Hop.

But what is all the fuss about when it comes to understanding today's culture and technology?

Business models due for a change?

Globally, ever-trending Black Eyed Pea's singer Will.i.Am joined MRM Worldwide's chief executive Marc Landsberg, composer Tod Machover and Intel's vice president, creative services Johan Jervoe, to discuss how technology is transforming creativity. McCann Worldwide's chief Nick Brien hosted the discussion. During the discussion, the eclectic music producer highlighted the extent to which today's market and culture is misunderstood...

"There is a major shift with what advertising agencies used to do and now. Advertising agencies are still important but they're trying to figure out what this new culture we're experiencing is about." He then went on to explain the importance of the concept of "communicating" instead of "marketing" to today and future generations.

John Polman was in a similar vein when he said... "Agencies need to organise around consumers, not around clients"

If that is so, then surely our business models need to change?

So why bother with taking extra efforts to please a niche group?

Louise Meek, assistant brand manager for Hansa Pilsner answered: "Until this year, Hansa Pilsener has never specifically

targeted this consumer segment, so it is important to us as a brand that we listen to this niche group and better understand how we can be as relevant as possible within their space."

What is expected from this group?

"I don't think it is an expectation from the group but rather the talent and potential we see in consumers who hang out at events like the Thesis Social Jam Sessions. We view these consumers as a group of creative minds who are exactly the sort of people whom we are hoping to engage with and offer them opportunities to kickstart their business ideas with the support of Hansa Pilsener.

"We have identified these sorts of consumers as the future Vuyo's of this world, the guys with 'Beeg Beeg Dreams' who see the world differently and believe they can be a success. This is where the synergy lies and why we care so much about this consumer segment," she says.

In which other projects related to this segment is Hansa Pilsner involved?

"We are launching our new 330ml embossed bottle in July nationwide. This pack innovation will, hopefully, allow Hansa to become more relevant and be reappraised by this consumer segment, who currently views our pack as outdated and not for them. We would like the consumers at Thesis this weekend to be the very first to taste the Kiss of the Saaz Hop in our stylish new bottle.

"Besides the pack launch, Hansa Pilsener is embarking on an exciting new campaign in Johannesburg; it will be launching in August of this year. We aim to tap into the entrepreneurial talent that South Africa has to offer and we are looking for people with great ideas who, like Hansa, have a special ingredient within them that makes them successful. Hansa Pilsener will be giving away R25 000 worth of support each to the winners of this competition. Listen out on YFM for competition details from 1 August," says Meek.

There is a lesson or two that could be learned from this. Marketing strategies cannot remain solid and rigid when the market itself is flexible and on the move more rapidly than ever. Macro environmental signals such as technology a cultural evolution are ever less discernible to the suits in the offices, and they change more rapidly. The best chance of success is by "communicating" with markets and catering as well as possible for them with a focused eye.

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